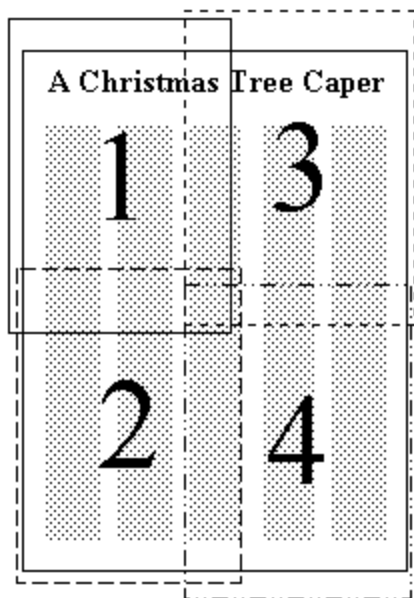


NOTE: This newspaper appearance was divided and enlarged to fill 8 ½" x 11" pages, roughly in the manner shown below.



TERRY

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Out of Order

By JACK RITCHIE

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MY DAUGHTER GINNY was angry. "The Army had the nerve to cut off his sideburns."

I nodded consolingly. "It might damage his voice. You never know what causes talent, especially in rock and roll singers."

She put down the newspaper. "I don't think you're at all sympathetic to the problems of the younger generation."

I rapped ash from my pipe. "That's not true. I was once a teen-ager for the F.B.I."

Ginny smiled with some superiority. "Youth is not necessarily flighty."

"We teen-agers are also aware of the problems of the world and we're indignant practically all the time. Yet we retain our enthusiasm, our optimism. We are not jaded."

My wife Ruth regarded me affectionately. "You're not very jaded, dear. And besides, it hardly ever shows when you wear a blue suit. You look very good in blue."

Henry Palmer, the boy next door, was like most seventeen-year-olds. Not particularly happy about it. "We are doomed to inherit the world created by our parents. We must pay for their mistakes, their lack of foresight."

My wife smiled at him. "Are you failing in history again, Henry?"

He nodded gloomily.

"For instance," Ginny said. "We take an interest in local politics. Henry and I and our whole high school class are going to the town meeting tonight. I've

to be mayor now. I have the job of nominating him."

We got to the town hall at about eight o'clock. There were about two hundred people at the meeting and we knew just about all of them. Ginny and Henry took seats up front among their classmates, but Ruth and I remained in the rear of the hall.

Mayor Perkins presided at a long table. He peered over his glasses and rapped the table with his gavel. "I guess we might as well get started."

After the minutes and the old business were taken care of, Elmer roused himself. "Anybody got something to bring up before we get to the nominations?"

There were fifteen seconds of silence and then Ginny got to her feet. "Mr. Mayor, I am here to speak for the wide-awake youth of this town."

Elmer quickly stifled a yawn that had just begun.

"Mr. Mayor," Ginny said. "We would like to ask some pertinent questions."

She looked at the list in her hand. "First, we'd like to know if there is any graft in the town hall?"

**SHE LOOKED AT
HER LIST**

Elmer was interested. "So

now, Ginny, if I was you, I'd hand that list to the next mayor. I'm practically out of office now, come next month's election."

I glanced at Frank Lowell. I thought he looked rather white. Ginny was dubious, but she nodded and sat down.

NOMINATIONS FOR MAYOR

Elmer tapped his gavel on the table. "All right now, we'll have nominations for mayor. But first I want to say that I'm not running again. It was a dirty trick in the first place. It wasn't my turn."

Ginny got to her feet. "Mr. Mayor. Speaking for the youth of this town, I demand that all nominations be of forward-looking, progressive men. We need new faces. We want none of the old entrenched guard."

I shifted in my chair, ready to nominate Frank Lowell.

Frank quickly got to his feet. "I agree with that girl. She's got a good head on her shoulders. Therefore I nominate Miss Ginny Edwards for the office of mayor of this fine progressive town."

His wife blinked and then smiled. "I second."

Elmer leered at me. He spoke swiftly. "There being no further nominations, I declare the nominations to be closed."

I rose. "Now wait a minute..."

He banged the gavel. "The chairman of the town council is out of order." He turned to Ginny and smiled. "You got a good chance of winning, girl, considering you're the only one on the ballot. Congratulations."

Ginny was aghast. "But I'm a minor. I can't even vote."

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"For instance," Ginny said. "We take an interest in local politics. Henry and I and our whole high school class are going to the town meeting tonight. I've been appointed to ask embarrassing questions."

"But, dear," Ruth said. "Your father is chairman of the town council."

CRUSADING FERVOR

Ginny's eyes were bright with crusading fervor. "I'm not going to put Daddy on the griddle, but I've got a gigantic list of questions for Mayor Perkins."

Ruth put her magazine back in the rack. "They're having nominations for mayor tonight too, aren't they, George?"

I nodded. "Elmer will be tickled pink that his term is over. The job takes a lot of time and there's no pay."

I grinned. "Usually all of us on the council take turns running for the job as a civic duty, but Elmer missed the last nominating meeting. When he came back from his vacation he found that we'd nominated and elected him mayor. He hasn't spoken to most of us since."

I filled my pipe with fresh tobacco. "It's Frank Lowell's turn

of this town."

Elmer quickly stifled a yawn that had just begun.

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SHE LOOKED AT HER LIST

Elmer was interested. "So would I. This job doesn't pay anything, you know."

Ginny frowned and consulted her list for number two. "How does it happen that the ski hill wasn't open once last winter?" Her voice became heavy with sarcasm. "It this town too impoverished to hire a supervisor for our recreation there?"

"Well, not exactly," Elmer said slowly. "Just happens we didn't have any snow to speak of." He chuckled. "That's what happens when you got no snow. Tough sledding."

Henry got to his feet. "Is our garbage disposal plant operating at one hundred percent efficiency?" he demanded.

Elmer thought it over. "Our plant was built to handle a town of four thousand. We got only thirty-five hundred people." He rubbed his chin. "All I can see is that we get out and ring doorbells. Get people to contribute more garbage."

He glanced at the clock. "How big a list you got there, Ginny?"

She seemed quite proud of herself. "Eighty-three separate items."

Elmer had a tight smile. "Well

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Frank Lowell rubbed his hands. "It is true that Miss Edwards is too young to vote."

"However there is nothing in the Constitution which prevents her from being nominated and elected."

When the meeting adjourned, Ginny came to me in a panic. Her voice squeaked. "I don't want to be mayor. It'll interfere with my social life. And besides, I'm just an under-aged helpless girl child."

I patted her shoulder. "Don't worry, honey. You may be elected mayor, but you won't be allowed to take office. According to the charter of this town you have to be at least twenty-five before you can do that, and that's a long time after your term expires."

Ginny closed her eyes in sheer relief.

We began walking to our car. "Similar things have happened to congressmen in the past. They get elected while still under the qualifying age and then have to wait several months or longer before they are allowed to take their seats."

"Dear," my wife said thoughtfully. "Does that mean that this

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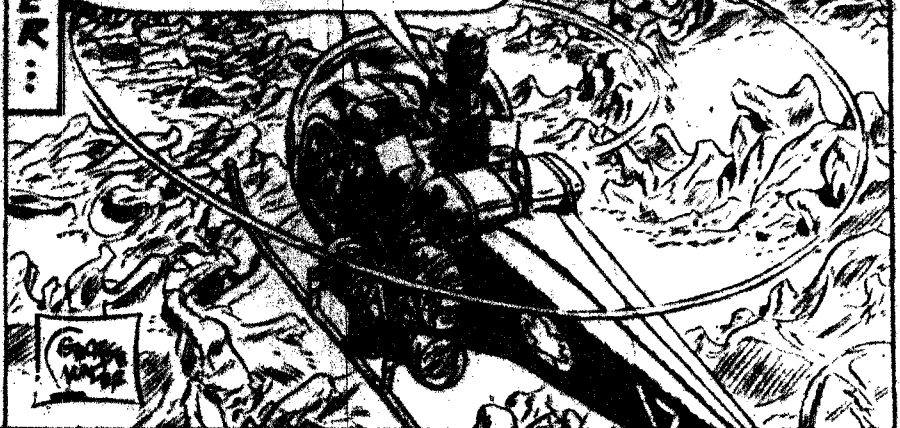
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town will be without an actual mayor for the next two years?"

I nodded happily. "It's a vacation for all of us. I wouldn't take the job if they paid me."

Ruth was silent for a few moments. "But dear, when the mayor is absent or unable to serve, who takes his place?"

I thought about that and my smile began to fade.

There was a hint of disloyal laughter in her voice. "Doesn't the chairman of the town council take his place? For the full two years?"

She touched my arm. "Mr. Acting Mayor, don't you think we

ought to go to Harrington's and have a soda to celebrate?"

I didn't enjoy it too much. I was busy reading Ginny's list.

THE END

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